

Tripartite social summit, 16 October 2018

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The main topic of the Tripartite Social Summit was “**Reinforcing competitiveness, sustainable job creation and social fairness in the European Union**”. The discussions were structured around three sub-themes:

- The digital revolution and its potential for labour markets and the economy
- Implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights: stock-taking and way forward
- The Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 including InvestEU, ESF+ and the deepening of the EMU.

In his statement, the **President of the European Council**, Donald Tusk, said: “This is a critically important week and with less than 6 months to go until Brexit day, there is still far too much uncertainty. You are as impatient as I am for this uncertainty to end. I still believe we can get there in the coming weeks. If business is to thrive, and if citizens are to feel reassured, maximum stability, legal certainty and pragmatic solutions are needed.”

The **President of the European Commission**, Jean-Claude Juncker stressed: “12 million new jobs have been created since 2014, investment is picking up and the economy is growing. One year after the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights at the Gothenburg Summit, this is the time to conclude the legislative work on important priorities such as work-life balance, predictable and transparent working conditions, access to social protection, the coordination of social security systems and the new European Labour Authority. I trust that the Austrian presidency will play its role as a bridge builder and help us to strengthen the social dimension of Europe – a Europe which protects, empowers and defends.”

From the side of the **rotating presidency, Austria’s** Chancellor, Sebastian Kurz, underlined: “Digitalisation is the foremost development that will change our lives decisively in the years and decades to come. Europe cannot

allow itself to fall behind the other highly competitive regions as the world goes digital. Our success in preparing for these changes, strengthening Europe's capacity to innovate and seizing the opportunities offered by digitalisation will shape Europe's future competitiveness as a place to do business. It will also secure jobs and prosperity for the citizens of Europe. For that reason, digitalisation is a core issue for the Austrian Presidency, and we are working swiftly to make maximum progress on key files, such as the Digital Single Market, by the end of the year. We also have a strong strategic focus on artificial intelligence."

BusinessEurope's President, Pierre Gattaz, representing employers (BusinessEurope, CEEP, UEAPME) stated: "The EU economic recovery continues but at lower rates than a year ago. Moreover, there remain downside risks, linked to political uncertainty and rising protectionism. It is more important than ever to ensure that the EU and all its member states, together with social partners, pursue reforms that improve competitiveness, growth and employment across Europe. The role of benchmarking should be strengthened as it is an effective tool for member states to learn from the best in different policies, gradually converging towards the best performing ones. A key challenge is to increase productivity in Europe. This requires more targeted investment in physical and social infrastructures, in particular quality education and training and incentives for the take-up of new technologies by SMEs. Furthermore, skills shortages continue to be a real concern for employers, even in member states with relatively high unemployment."

Luca Visentini, **General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation** (ETUC), said: "Working people are contributing plenty to increased competitiveness, but social fairness is rapidly declining. Wage increases in the European Union over the last 16 years would have been four times higher if they had reflected productivity increases. Jobs need to be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable and offer a decent life. For this to happen, we need a socially sustainable EU economic governance with increased public and private investment, social partners involved in the Semester and in European and national reforms, strengthened collective bargaining in all EU countries for a fair wage for working people. A just transition must ensure workers hit by climate change and digitalisation are not left behind. EU legislation and the new EU MFF must support social cohesion and inclusion and full implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights."

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